



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attorney General McGraw Sues Ohio Collection Agency, National Enterprise Systems; Asks Court to Stop Firm from Making Unlawful Threats

A Braxton County woman authorized an Ohio collection agency to charge \$5,000.00 to her credit card because the company was threatening to have her daughter arrested at work. The same collection agency told the father of a Kanawha County woman that his daughter would be "arrested for fraud of the federal government" unless she made an immediate payment of \$5,000.00 toward a student loan. Such strong-arm collection tactics are effective, but much like holding a gun to someone's head, they are illegal.

It is precisely this type of conduct that Attorney General McGraw seeks to stop by filing a lawsuit today against the company that allegedly made these threats to several West Virginians, National Enterprise Systems, Inc. ("NES") of Solon, Ohio. McGraw's complaint alleged a wide range of other unlawful conduct, including adding unlawful collection fees to tuition owed by students to West Virginia colleges and universities. The suit asks the court to order NES to cease its abusive practices, to pay civil penalties to the state, and to award restitution to consumers who were victimized.

"Failure to pay a debt is not a crime and companies that make such false threats have violated both state and federal debt collection law. My office will not tolerate abuse and harassment of consumers who may be in debt through no fault of their own. The Legislature has authorized my office to enforce the laws that prohibit such conduct, and we intend to do so, particularly when the unlawful conduct is as extreme as has been alleged against National Enterprise Systems," McGraw said.

Any persons wishing to file a complaint about a consumer matter or to alert the Attorney General about unfair or deceptive practices may do so by calling the Consumer Protection Hot Line, 1-800-368-8808, or by obtaining a complaint form from the consumer web page at www.wvago.gov.

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